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HISTORY

from the failure of the English people to understand him, and his failure to understand them. As little did he understand the English Constitution—a Constitution which at the moment was in a somewhat chaotic condition : he had to work an imperfect and defective machine.

The conversations of William with Halifax, which are recorded in Miss Foxcroft's *Life of Halifax*,¹ and which run from December 1688 to about May 1690, throw the clearest light on the opinions of William during the first year of his reign, and explain his difficulties. It is obvious that William neither before nor after his accession made much effort to seek popularity. He did not think it part of the business of a statesman or a ruler to please people. He told Halifax that ' he would never put it in his head to think people would be satisfied with anything. Hee would do what was right, and have [? leave] it there/ Halifax thought this sincere but foolish. * I told him that was not enough for a king, and especially here. The world is a beast that must be cozened before it be tamed/ Another time William said ' hee would think no more of doing things popular, but doing what was right/ On this Halifax remarks that, ' till mankind is more reasonable, that may be a dangerous rmaxime for a prince/ It was the more dangerous because William always understood Europe much better than Eng-

land. According to Halifax, he hardly understood the English Constitution and consequently did not know how to work it.² ' He had a wrong notion of the Privy Council: thought the government was to reside there/ Consequently he was too anxious to limit the numbers of the Privy Council, and did not include in it as many members as he should have done. * Double the number would have

¹ ii. 200-52. These conversations were unknown to Macaulay.

²Cf. Bumet, i, 691.